Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A machine-implemented method comprising:

discovering information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with a message recipient, wherein at least one of the communication channels is a bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of a recipient device ~~cellular phone and the discovering information comprises determining at least one factor chosen from the group comprising: whether the cellular phone is turned on, whether the cellular phone is currently in use, or a geographic location of the cellular phone~~;

maintaining a data repository comprising the accessibility state information discovered by said discovering and user preferences relating to user preferred message routing paths; and

routing a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the message recipient via the at least one bridging device based on information in the data repository.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the maintained data repository further comprises information about the message recipient that facilitates context-appropriate message routing decisions to be made.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein a context-appropriate message routing decision is based at least in part on a level of obtrusiveness of an associated communications channel.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the accessibility state information discovered by said discovering includes information relating to whether the recipient is reachable via a communications channel.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the accessibility state information discovered by said discovering includes information relating to whether the recipient is available via a communications channel.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein routing the message comprises choosing one or more communications channels associated with the message recipient such that at least one of the following conditions is met: the message is likely to reach the message recipient, the message is likely to reach the message recipient in a timely manner, or the message is likely to reach the message recipient at a context-appropriate level of obtrusiveness.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein discovering information comprises receiving information from a communications service provider relating to at least one of the message recipient's communications status or activity.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein discovering information comprises receiving information from the message recipient relating to the message recipient's communications status.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing a capability for a machine to receive from a message sender a device-independent identifier uniquely identifying the message recipient.

13. (Currently Amended) Machine-readable instructions, embodied in a medium or a propagated signal, for causing the machine to perform operations comprising:

discover information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with a message recipient, wherein at least one of the communication channels is bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of a recipient device ~~a cellular phone and said discover information operation comprises determining at least one factor chosen from the group comprising: whether the cellular phone is turned on, whether the cellular phone is currently in use, or a geographic location of the cellular phone~~;

maintain a data repository comprising the accessibility state information discovered by said discover information operation and user preferences relating to user preferred message routing paths; and

route a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the message recipient via the at least one bridging device based on information in the data repository.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the instructions to maintain the data repository further comprise instructions to maintain information about the message recipient that facilitates context-appropriate message routing decisions to be made.

16. (Original) The instructions of claim 15 wherein a context-appropriate message routing decision is based at least in part on a level of obtrusiveness of an associated communications channel.

17. (Previously Presented) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the accessibility state information discovered by said discover information operation includes information relating to whether the recipient is reachable via a communications channel.

18. (Previously Presented) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the accessibility state information discovered by said discover information operation includes information relating to whether the recipient is available via a communications channel.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Previously Presented) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the instructions to route the message comprise instructions to choose one or more communications channels associated with the message recipient such that at least one the following conditions is met: the message is likely to reach the message recipient the message is likely to reach the message recipient in a timely manner, or the message is likely to reach the message recipient at a context-appropriate level of obtrusiveness.

21. (Previously Presented) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the instructions to discover information comprise instructions to receive information from a communications service provider relating to at least one of the message recipient's communications status or activity.

22. (Original) The instructions of claim 13 wherein the instructions to discover information comprise instructions to receive information from the message recipient relating to the message recipient's communications status.

23. (Original) The instructions of claim 13 further comprising instructions to receive from a message sender a

device-independent identifier uniquely identifying the message recipient.

24. (Currently Amended) A message-routing system comprising:

one or more discovery processes configured to discover information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with a message recipient, wherein at least one of the communication channels is a bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of a recipient device ~~cellular phone and said one or more discovery processes determines at least one factor chosen from the group comprising: whether the cellular phone is turned on, whether the cellular phone is currently in use, or a geographic location of the cellular phone~~;

a data repository configured to store the accessibility state information discovered by said one or more discovery processes and user preferences relating to user preferred message routing paths; and

a message routing decision process configured to route a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the

message recipient via the bridging device based on information in the data repository.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the data repository further is configured to store information about the message recipient that facilitates context-appropriate message routing decisions to be made.

27. (Canceled).

28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the message routing decision process is configured to choose one or more communications channels associated with the message recipient such that at least one the following conditions is met: the message is likely to reach the message recipient the message is likely to reach the message recipient in a timely manner, or the message is likely to reach the message recipient at a context-appropriate level of obtrusiveness.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the one or more discovery processes are configured to receive information from at least one of a communications service

provider or from the message recipient relating to at least one of the message recipient's communications status or activity.

30-36. (Canceled).

37. (Currently Amended) A machine-implemented method comprising:

discovering information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with a message recipient, wherein one or more of the communication channels is a bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of the recipient device;

maintaining a data repository comprising the accessibility state information discovered by said discovering; and

routing a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the message recipient through the at least one bridging device to the recipient device based on information in the data repository.

38. (Currently Amended) A message-routing system comprising:

one or more discovery processes configured to discover information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with a message recipient, wherein one or more of the communication channels is a bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of a recipient device;

a data repository configured to store the accessibility state information discovered by said one or more discovery processes and user preferences relating to message routing paths, wherein the user preferences include user specified communication channel delivery priorities for more than one user specified time slot; and

a message routing decision process configured to route a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the message recipient via the at least one bridging device based on information in the data repository and the user preferences.

39-40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) A message-routing system comprising:

a reception unit configured to receive a device-independent identifier uniquely identifying the message recipient;

one or more discovery processes configured to discover information relating to an accessibility state of one or more communication channels associated with the message recipient, wherein one or more of the communication channels is a bridged connection including at least one bridging device and a recipient device, and wherein the discovering information comprises interrogating at least one bridging device regarding the availability of a recipient device ~~wherein one or more of the communication channels is a cellular phone and said one or more discovery processes determine whether a cellular phone is within a cell signal range based on data packet transmissions~~;

a data repository configured to store the accessibility state information discovered by said one or more discovery processes; and

a message routing decision process configured to route a message addressed to the at least one bridging device to the message recipient via the at least one bridging device based on information in the data repository.